

## Infrastructure deal: Senate ready to move ahead on \$1T bill

By LISA MASCARO  
and KEVIN FREKING  
Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Senate Republicans reached a deal with Democrats on Wednesday over major outstanding issues in a \$1 trillion infrastructure package, ready to begin consideration of a key part of President Joe Biden's agenda. An evening test vote was possible.

Lead GOP negotiator Sen. Rob Portman of Ohio made the announcement at the Capitol, flanked by four other Republican senators who have been in talks with Democrats and the White House on the bipartisan package.

"We now have an agreement on the major issues," Portman said. "We are prepared to move forward." Asked about the agreement during a tour of a truck plant in Pennsylvania, Biden said, "I feel confident about it."

Still, the agreement only pushes the package toward consideration by the full Senate. It's unclear if enough Republican senators will support passage, and many of them raised questions during a private lunch Wednesday. Senators were given a thick binder of briefing materials but wanted more details.

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## TEE BILL



Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio, the lead GOP negotiator in the infrastructure talks, is joined by, from left, Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., and Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, as he announces an agreement with Democrats on a \$1 trillion infrastructure bill, saying they are ready to vote to take up the bill, at the Capitol in Washington, Wednesday, July 28, 2021.

Associated Press

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## Infrastructure deal: Senate ready to move ahead on \$1T bill

Continued from Front

For days, senators in a bipartisan group have worked with the White House to salvage the deal, a first part of Biden's big infrastructure agenda. Swelling to more than 700 pages, the bill includes \$550 billion in new spending on public works projects.

The outcome will set the stage for the next debate over Biden's much more ambitious \$3.5 trillion spending package, a strictly partisan pursuit of far-reaching programs and

services including child care, tax breaks and health care that touch almost every corner of American life. Republicans strongly oppose that bill, and may try to stop both.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer opened the Senate on Wednesday announcing a possible test vote on the bipartisan package in the evening. It would require 60 votes in the evenly split 50-50 Senate to proceed to consideration, meaning support from both parties. That would launch a potentially

days-long process.

Senate GOP leader Mitch McConnell did not disclose during the lunch how he would vote, senators said. The Republican negotiators met with McConnell earlier Wednesday and he appeared to give his nod to proceeding. Portman said the leader "all along has been encouraging our efforts."

Sen. Krysten Sinema of Arizona, a lead Democratic negotiator, said she expected the package would have enough support to move forward.



**Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., left, and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., right, are seated together during a luncheon with Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, at the Capitol in Washington, Wednesday, July 28, 2021.**

Associated Press

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Sinema, who talks often with Republicans, also said she spoke with Biden Wednesday and he was "very excited" to have an agreement.

Democrats, who have slim control of the House and Senate, face a timeline to act on what would be some of the most substantial pieces of legislation in years. Filling in the details has become a month-long exercise ever since a bipartisan group of senators struck an agreement with Biden more than a month ago over the broad framework. There remains work to do as they draft the legislative text. The new spending in the package dropped from about \$600 billion to \$550 billion, senators said, as money was eliminated for a public-private infrastructure bank and was reduced in other categories, including transit.

The package still includes \$110 billion for highways, \$65 billion for broadband and \$73 billion to modernize the nation's electric grid, according a White House fact sheet.

Additionally, there's \$25 bil-

lion for airports, \$55 billion for waterworks and more than \$50 billion to bolster infrastructure against cyberattacks and climate change. There's also \$7.5 billion for electric vehicle charging stations.

Still unclear is how to pay for the package after Democrats rejected a plan to bring in funds by hiking the gas tax drivers pay at the pump and Republicans dashed a plan to boost the IRS to go after tax scofflaws. Senators said funding would come from repurposing COVID-19 relief aid, the sale of broadcast spectrum and possibly reinstating fees that chemical companies used to pay for cleaning up the nation's worst hazardous waste sites. Unclear is whether a proposal to draw funds from reversing a Trump-era pharmaceutical rebate would be included.

The final deal could run into political trouble if it doesn't pass muster as fully paid for when the Congressional Budget Office assesses the details. But Portman said the package will be "more than paid for." □



# White House considering vaccine mandate for federal workers

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The White House is strongly considering requiring federal employees to show proof they've been vaccinated against the coronavirus or otherwise submit to regular testing and wear a mask — a potentially major shift in policy that reflects growing concerns about the spread of the more infectious delta variant.

The possible vaccine mandate for federal employees — regardless of the rate of transmission in their area — is one option under consideration by the Biden administration, according to a person familiar with the plans who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss deliberations that have yet to be made public. The White House is expected to announce its final decision after completing a policy review this week.

According to an analysis from the federal Office of Management and Budget, in 2020 there were more than 4.2 million federal workers nationwide, including those in the military. President Joe Biden suggested Tuesday that expanding that mandate to the entire federal workforce was "under consideration," but offered no further details. The Department of Veterans Affairs on Monday became the first federal agency to require vaccinations, for its health workers.



Vice President Kamala Harris speaks during a meeting with Native American community leaders about voting rights together with Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, in the Vice President's Ceremonial Office at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on the White House complex, in Washington, Tuesday, July 27, 2021.

Associated Press

The broader requirement under consideration would be the most significant shift by the Biden administration this week as the White House grapples with a surge in coronavirus cases and hospitalizations nationwide driven by the spread of the delta variant and breakthrough infections among vaccinated Americans.

On Tuesday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reversed its masking guidelines and said that all Americans living in areas with substantial or high coronavirus transmission rates should wear masks indoors, regardless of their

vaccination status.

And just like that, masks were back at the White House.

By Tuesday afternoon, when the latest CDC data found that Washington, D.C., is facing substantial rates of transmission, White House staff were asked to begin wearing masks indoors starting Wednesday. Press were asked to follow suit, and those staff and reporters remaining in the White House were already masking up.

An aide for Vice President Kamala Harris passed out masks to the reporters covering her events earlier that day, asking them to put

them on before walking in to her meeting with Native American leaders on voting rights.

Masks will also be required again at the U.S. House. Citing the new CDC guidance, the Capitol's Attending Physician Brian P. Monahan issued a memo late Tuesday reinstating the mask requirement for all individuals, vaccinated and not, when entering the House chamber or other interior spaces in the complex when others are present. Fines that had been established under previous House rules can be imposed for offenders, though exceptions will be

allowed when lawmakers are recognized to speak during proceedings.

For the Senate, with far fewer members, the masks are being recommended but not required for the chamber and other indoor spaces.

"All individuals should wear a well-fitted, medical-grade filtration mask," Monahan wrote in a similar letter obtained by The Associated Press.

Biden dismissed concerns that the new masking guidance from the CDC could create confusion among Americans, saying those who remain unvaccinated are the ones who are "sowing enormous confusion."

"The more we learn, the more we learn about this virus and the delta variation, the more we have to be worried and concerned. And there's only one thing we know for sure — if those other 100 million people got vaccinated, we'd be in a very different world," he told reporters after speaking to intelligence community employees at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence on Tuesday.

But the whiplash on masking and vaccinations — just the day before, White House press secretary Jen Psaki had avoided questions over why the administration had yet to require vaccines for federal workers — reflects the uncertainty surrounding the coronavirus. □

# U.S. acting to better protect infrastructure from cyberthreats

By ERIC TUCKER

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Biden administration is taking steps to harden cybersecurity defenses for critical infrastructure, announcing on Wednesday the development of performance goals and a voluntary public-private partnership to protect core sectors.

The actions, outlined in an order from President Joe Biden, are an acknowledgment of the cybersecurity vulnerabilities of critical industries — a reality made

clear by the May hack of the nation's largest pipeline, which delivers about 45% of the fuel consumed on the East Coast.

They also are meant to address the "patchwork of sector-specific statutes" that have been adopted piecemeal over time and that leave the government without a uniform or adequate cybersecurity threshold, according to a senior administration official who briefed reporters before a formal announcement.

The partnership was

launched as a pilot program in April with electricity utilities, and another plan is underway for natural gas pipelines.

Additional alliances with other sectors will be formed this year, the White House said.

The move comes as federal officials have been promoting greater cybersecurity resiliency among private companies, including announcing new requirements and protections for pipeline owners and operators last week. □



In this May 11, 2021 file photo, a Colonial Pipeline station is seen in Smyrna, Ga., near Atlanta.

Associated Press



# Census may delay data release if forced to disclose records

By **MIKE SCHNEIDER**  
**Associated Press**

The U.S. Census Bureau could be forced to delay even further the release of redistricting data used for drawing congressional and legislative districts if it's ordered to disclose more records in response to a lawsuit, the agency's chief scientist said in court papers this week.

The redistricting data is set to be made public by the middle of next month. That could be postponed by as much as six additional months, however, if the statistical agency is ordered to release more records dealing with how it counted people living in what it refers to as "group quarters," Census Bureau Chief Scientist John Abowd said in a declaration.

The bureau designates group quarters as dormitories, prisons, nursing homes and group homes.

The release of the redistricting data already was postponed by five months from its original March 31 deadline because of delays caused by the coronavirus pandemic, sending states scrambling to revise redistricting deadlines. Two states, Ohio and Alabama, sued the Census Bureau in



College students begin moving in for the fall semester at N.C. State University in Raleigh, N.C., Friday, July 31, 2020.

**Associated Press**

an unsuccessful effort to get it to release the data before August.

"The effect on the schedule for delivering redistricting data would likely be substantial," Abowd said of any potential order to disclose further group quarter records.

The Republican advocacy group, Fair Lines America Foundation, sued the Census Bureau in a public records lawsuit for information about how the census

count was conducted in group quarters. The group says it's concerned about the accuracy of that count and wants to make sure anomalies didn't affect the state population figures used for divvying up congressional seats among the states.

The group facilities were among the most difficult places to count people during the 2020 census because the pandemic forced colleges to shutter

dorms and send students home, and nursing homes and other facilities restricted access in an effort to protect vulnerable residents from the virus.

Abowd said that if the Census Bureau is required to release additional records as part of the Fair Lines lawsuit it will need as much as six months to recalibrate a new statistical tool meant to protect people's privacy so that they can't be identified through the data.

Delaying the release of the redistricting data past Aug. 16 could get the Census Bureau in trouble with a federal court in Ohio. As part of a settlement of the state of Ohio's lawsuit, the Census Bureau promised to release the redistricting data no later than Aug. 16. The privacy method adds calibrated error to the data, most noticeably at small geographic levels such as neighborhood blocks, in order to prevent people being identified by high-powered computers through matches with third-party data such as voting records or credit card data. Because of the privacy method, data at the neighborhood block-level may look "fuzzy," with weird situations such as blocks showing children living with no adults or the number of people not matching the number of housing units in a block, acting Census Bureau director Ron Jarmin said Wednesday in a blog post. Jarmin said that blocks should be added together to produce accurate results.

"Though unusual, situations like these in the data help confirm that confidentiality is being protected," Jarmin said. □

## Gun maker offers \$33M to settle suit by Sandy Hook families



In this Jan. 28, 2013, file photo, firearms training unit Detective Barbara J. Mattson, of the Connecticut State Police, holds up a Bushmaster AR-15 rifle, the same make and model of gun used by Adam Lanza in the Sandy Hook School shooting, for a demonstration during a hearing of a legislative subcommittee reviewing gun laws, at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford, Conn.

**Associated Press**

By **DAVE COLLINS**  
**Associated Press**

**HARTFORD, Conn. (AP)**  
— The maker of the rifle

used in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting has offered some of the victims' families nearly \$33 million to settle their lawsuit over how the company marketed the firearm to the public. Lawyers for now-bankrupt Remington filed the offers late Tuesday in Waterbury Superior Court in Connecticut. The nine families suing the company, who are being offered nearly \$3.7 million apiece, are considering the proposals, their lawyers said.

A Hartford lawyer representing Remington, James Rotondo, declined to comment Wednesday. The settlement offers were filed a day after a judge denied Remington's re-

quest to dismiss the lawsuit. A Bushmaster AR-15-style rifle made by Remington was used to kill 20 first graders and six educators at the Newtown, Connecticut, school on Dec. 14, 2012. The 20-year-old gunman, Adam Lanza, killed his mother at their Newtown home before the massacre, then killed himself with a handgun as police arrived at the school. Relatives of nine victims killed in the shooting say in their lawsuit that Remington should have never sold such a dangerous weapon to the public and allege it targeted younger, at-risk males in marketing and product placement in violent video games. They say their fo-

cus is on preventing future mass shootings. One of the plaintiffs, Nicole Hockley, whose 6-year-old son Dylan died in the shooting, said Wednesday that the families need to talk with their lawyers about the settlement offers and declined further comment. Joshua Koskoff, an attorney for the families, said the settlements were offered by two of Remington's insurers. "Ironshore and James River ... deserve credit for now realizing that promoting the use of AR-15s as weapons of war to civilians is indefensible. Insuring this kind of conduct is an unprofitable and untenable business model," Koskoff said in a statement. □



# U.S., India agree to expand multilateral security partnership

By **SHEIKH SAALIQ**

**Associated Press**

**NEW DELHI (AP)** — The top diplomats of India and the United States pledged Wednesday to expand their multilateral security partnership, underscoring the deepening of ties between two countries concerned over China's growing influence in the region. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar met in New Delhi and sought to strengthen a regional front against Beijing's assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific and their cooperation in Afghanistan.

They also lauded each country's help in fighting the coronavirus and said their vaccine partnership is an effort to end the pandemic. Blinken also announced a \$25 million fund to support India's COVID-19 vaccination program. "There are few relationships in the world that are more vital than one between the U.S. and India. We are the world's two leading democracies and our diversity fuels our national strength," Blinken said at a joint news conference. Washington has made no



**India's Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, right, welcomes U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken at Hyderabad House in New Delhi, India Wednesday, July 28, 2021.**

**Associated Press**

secret of the U.S. desire for India's help in isolating China. The two countries have steadily ramped up their military relationship and signed a string of defense deals.

The U.S. and India are part of the Quad regional alliance that also includes Japan and Australia and focuses on China's growing economic and military strength. China has called the Quad an attempt to

contain its ambitions.

Blinken's India visit comes just days after the No. 2 U.S. diplomat, Wendy Sherman, was in China.

Blinken said he and Jaishankar also discussed regional security issues including Afghanistan, where the U.S. is expected to complete its military withdrawal in August. He called India's contribution to the stability of Afghanistan "vital."

Blinken said there was no

"military solution" to the conflict in Afghanistan and that the country would turn into a "pariah state" if the Taliban takes control by force. "We will continue to work together to sustain the gains of the Afghan people and support regional stability after the withdrawal of coalition forces from the country," Blinken said.

Jaishankar said the world wishes to see an "independent, sovereign, democrat-

ic and stable Afghanistan at peace with itself and with its neighbors," and cautioned that the country's "independence and sovereignty will only be ensured if it is free from malign influences."

New Delhi has often expressed concern that a Taliban takeover could lead to security threats against India.

India has provided Afghan security forces with operational training and military equipment, even though it has had no troops on the ground. It has also provided more than \$2 billion in development aid to Afghanistan.

In June, India's foreign ministry said it was in contact with "various stakeholders" in Afghanistan to discuss its future. More recently, officials from the two countries have increased mutual visits.

"New Delhi is clearly stepping up its game on the Afghanistan front," said Micheal Kugelman of the Asia Program at the Washington-based Wilson Center. "Its decision to engage more in regional diplomacy on Afghanistan signifies a desire to be more of a player than it has in the past." □

## Illegal border crossings into Lithuania pass 3,000

By **LIUDAS DAPKUS**

**Associated Press**

**VILNIUS, Lithuania (AP)** — Lithuania's border guard service said it detained 171 people caught illegally crossing from Belarus into Lithuania on Tuesday night, the largest number in a single day in 2021 and bringing the total number of migrants detained so far this year to 3,027.

The border service said the group of migrants, all from Iraq, will be placed in one of Lithuania's already crowded immigration detention centers. Illegal migration to Lithuania began growing dramatically after new sanctions were imposed on government

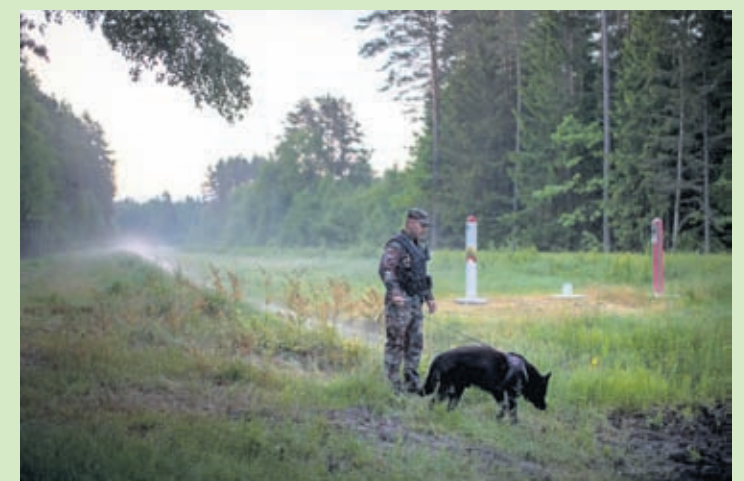
officials in neighboring Belarus.

In July some 2,366 migrants were detained, up from 473 in June, and compared to 81 for all of last year. Lithuania has accused Belarusian authorities of organizing border crossings by people from the Middle East and Africa. The European Union's border control agency has pledged to step up support to Lithuania to help stem the arrivals.

Lithuania says the influx is an act of retaliation by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. Since the authoritarian leader's reelection to a sixth term in an August 2020 vote

that the West denounced as rigged, he has cracked down on opposition protests in his country. His main election challenger fled to Lithuania under pressure. Lithuanian authorities believe most of the people attempting to enter the country traveled to Minsk, the capital of Belarus, on one of the four weekly flights from Iraq that carry up to 500 passengers on Boeing 747s. Lithuania Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis visited Baghdad this month for talks with Iraqi officials.

With no prior experience dealing with large numbers of asylum-seekers, the Lithuanian government



**In this file photo taken on Thursday, June 10, 2021, A member of the Lithuania State Border Guard Service patrols on the border with Belarus with a Belarusian, right, and Lithuanian, second right, border markers, near small town Kapciamiestis, some 160km (100 miles) of the capital Vilnius, Lithuania.**

**Associated Press**

sought help from the European Union and fellow member nations. The Estonian government sent 100 kilometers (60 miles) of barbed wire to help secure the most vulnerable sec-

tions of Lithuania's 678-kilometer-long (421-mile-long) border with Belarus. Lithuania had announced days earlier that it had run out of materials for reinforcing the border fence. □



# Russian police raid home of investigative journalist

By **DARIA LITVINOVA**

**Associated Press**

**MOSCOW (AP)** — Police in Russia raided the home of the chief editor of an investigative news site that was recently designated as a “foreign agent,” the latest move by authorities to raise the pressure on independent media before the country’s September parliamentary election.

The Insider news site chief editor Roman Dobrokhotov tweeted Wednesday that “police are knocking” on his apartment door, and his wife reported the raid to the OVD-Info legal aid group before her phone became unavailable.

A lawyer from another legal aid group, Pravoza-shchita Otkrytki, headed to Dobrokhotov’s apartment. The group said police seized cellphones, laptops and tablets during the raid, as well as Dobrokhotov’s international passport. Sergei Yezhov, a journalist with The Insider, said Dobrokhotov was supposed to travel outside of Russia on Wednesday.

Police also raided the home of Dobrokhotov’s parents, The Insider said. After the searches, Dobrokhotov was taken to a police precinct for questioning and then released.



**Roman Dobrokhotov, chief editor of The Insider walks surrounded police officers and journalists, in Moscow, Russia, Wednesday, July 28, 2021.**

**Associated Press**

He told reporters outside the precinct that The Insider will continue to operate despite the pressure from authorities.

“It will become more difficult to work now. I don’t have cell phones, I can’t travel and meet my colleagues many of our investigations are international,” Dobrokhotov said. “And, of course, it’s serious pressure. But it’s clear that The Insider will continue to exist. Investigations will be released even if I am arrested. If they

hope to halt the work of the news site, they hope in vain.”

Russian opposition supporters, independent journalists and human rights activists have faced increased government pressure ahead of the Sept. 19 vote, which is widely seen as an important part of President Vladimir Putin’s efforts to cement his rule before the 2024 presidential election.

The 68-year-old Russian leader, who has been in power for more than two

decades, pushed through constitutional changes last year that would potentially allow him to hold onto power until 2036.

In recent months, the government has designated several independent media outlets and journalists as “foreign agents” a label that implies additional government scrutiny and carries strong pejorative connotations that could discredit the recipients.

The targeted outlets include VTimes and Meduza.

VTimes subsequently shut down, citing the loss of advertisers, and Meduza launched a crowd-funding campaign after encountering the same problem.

The Insider was the latest addition to the list. The news outlet, which is registered in Latvia, has worked with the investigative group Bellingcat to investigate high-profile cases, such as the nerve agent poisonings of former Russian spy Sergei Sripal and Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. The Russian Justice Ministry acted under a law that is used to designate as foreign agents non-governmental organizations, media outlets and individuals who receive foreign funding and engage in activities loosely described as political.

Another law is used to outlaw groups deemed “undesirable” and makes membership in them a criminal offense. It has been used to ban 41 groups, including opposition groups, foreign NGOs and most recently, the publisher of Proekt, an online investigative media outlet.

The Justice Ministry last week also designated two Proekt journalists and three other reporters as foreign agents. □

## Countries in southeast Europe brace for heat wave

By **KONSTANTIN TESTORIDES and DEREK GATOPOULOS**

**Associated Press**

**SKOPJE, North Macedonia (AP)** — Authorities in several southeast European countries have issued weather warnings before a heat wave in the region expected Thursday that is set to push temperatures to as high as 43 C (109.4 F) in inland areas.

Public health officials in North Macedonia on Wednesday said all six of the country’s administrative regions would be affected by the emergency and urged a pause in construction work and called for municipal-level initia-

tives to help the elderly and the homeless.

High temperatures are expected through the week-end in North Macedonia and neighboring Albania, Bulgaria, and Greece, as well as parts of Romania

and Serbia.

In Albania’s central Dimal region, temperatures reached 42 C (107.6 F) Wednesday.

In the Bulgarian capital, Sofia, municipal workers handed out free bottles of

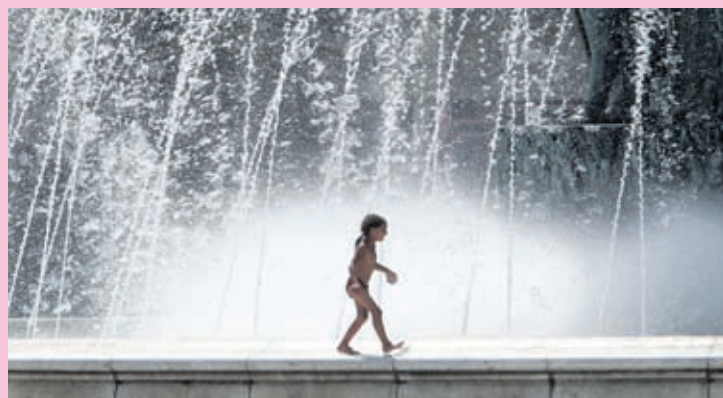
water at several locations in the city. Trucks were sent to water drying out sections of public parks and gardens. Municipal authorities in Athens this week began providing air-conditioned spaces to the public, and advised residents to remain indoors at midday and the early afternoon.

The Greek capital has also appointed a chief heat officer, becoming the first European capital to do so. Athens is part of a European network of cities created to combat the effects of high temperatures, alongside Paris, Rotterdam, Glasgow, and Seville.

“We’ve been talking about global warming for decades, but we haven’t talked much about heat,” the new Athens officer, Eleni Myrivili, said following her appointment last week.

“I look forward to raising awareness among the citizens of Athens about the grave dangers of extreme heat and helping decision-makers take action to cool the city and protect people and their communities.”

Wildfires raged for a second day in southern Greece, forcing evacuations in a mountainous area outside the western port city of Patras. □



**A girl walks on the edge of a fountain on a hot day in downtown Skopje, North Macedonia, Wednesday July 28, 2021.**

**Associated Press**



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## U.S. suspends cooperation with Guatemala attorney general

By S. PÉREZ D. and M. LEE  
Associated Press

**GUATEMALA CITY (AP)** —

The U.S. government has suspended cooperation with Guatemala's Attorney General's Office in response to the firing of its top anti-corruption prosecutor, saying Tuesday that it has "lost confidence" in the Central American country's willingness to fight corruption. U.S. State Department deputy spokeswoman Jalina Porter told reporters in Washington that the decision by Guatemala Attorney General Consuelo Porras to fire Juan Francisco Sandoval, the special prosecutor against impunity, "fits a pattern of behavior that indicates a lack of commitment to the rule of law and



Guatemalan President Alejandro Giammattei speaks during a press conference at the National Palace in Guatemala City, Tuesday, July 27, 2021.

Associated Press

independent, judicial, and prosecutorial processes."

"As a result, we have lost confidence in the attorney general and the intention to cooperate with the U.S. government and fight

corruption in good faith," Porter said. She said the suspension would remain in effect while the U.S. reviews its assistance to the Attorney General's Office. A strong U.S. response was

expected after Sandoval's dismissal Friday. He fled the country the same day. Protests in Guatemala have called for Porras' resignation. The firing came less than two months after Vice President Kamala Harris visited Guatemala and spoke with President Alejandro Giammattei about the importance of the country's anti-corruption efforts. Harris has targeted corruption in the region as one of the key factors in pushing outward migration.

Porter noted that U.S. officials had repeatedly made it clear to the "highest levels of government of Guatemala our view that the fight against corruption is essential to our shared goals of strengthening the

rule of law, increasing economic opportunity, and addressing the root causes of irregular migration."

She said the U.S. government recognized that Porras had the authority to dismiss Sandoval, "but our concern is what the implications with this decision for the rule of law and regional stability."

A day before Sandoval's firing, Porras had reassigned another prosecutor from Sandoval's office.

Porras has defended Sandoval's firing, accusing him of ideological bias in his prosecutions. Porras was appointed by the previous president, Jimmy Morales, but Giammattei has spoken of his friendship with her as well. □

## U.N. says its food aid runs out this week in Ethiopia's Tigray

**NAIROBI, Kenya (AP)** —

The head of the United Nations World Food Program says the agency will "run out of food" in Ethiopia's conflict-hit Tigray region on Friday, while hundreds of thousands of people there face the world's worst famine crisis

in a decade. Some 170 trucks with food and other supplies are "stuck" in the neighboring Afar region and "must be allowed to move NOW," David Beasley tweeted on Tuesday, noting that 100 such trucks are needed per day in Tigray. "People are starv-

ing." International pressure is again rising on Ethiopia's government to allow badly needed food and other supplies into Tigray, where aid hasn't reached some communities since the war started in November between Ethiopia's military and Tigray forces. The Associated Press has reported that scores of people have begun to starve to death.

Shortly after the WFP chief's statement, Ethiopia's government blamed the aid delivery problem on Tigray forces' "provocations" in the Afar region, which the U.N. says has the only remaining road route into Tigray.

But a WFP convoy trying to use that route was attacked on July 18, and insecurity remains a challenge. □



A man gestures as youth joining the Defense Forces gather, at Meskel Square, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Tuesday, July 27 2021.

Associated Press

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## COVID-19 status in Aruba

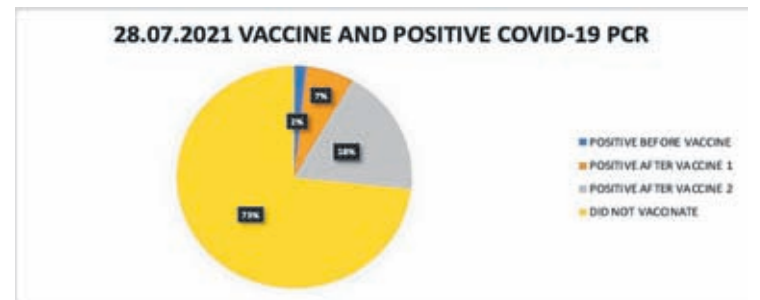
**ORANJESTAD – The Prime Minister of Aruba, Mrs. Evelyn Wever Croes, gave an update about the current situation of Covid in Aruba.**

Data is showing that positive covid cases are on the increase in Aruba once more. There are 302 active covid cases, of which 215 are residents and 87 non-residents. This increase is caused mainly by the Delta variant that is highly contagious. The non-residents are not arriving tourists, but also local students visiting for vacation and that are not yet vaccinated. The good news, however, is that the situation is not alarming yet as the hospital capacity is still safe. It is essential to be aware that the amount of positive covid cases is on the rise. Therefore, the crisis team is preparing a little more for the upcoming days.

As stated during the press conference the Prime Minister once more urges every citizen of Aruba, to keep themselves safe to try to help to get the situation under control. One of the effective methods to contain the virus is the Covid Vaccine. Those vaccinated can get infected with the Delta variant, but do not get any symptoms or get severely sick. Persons that are not vaccinated and get infected are the ones hospitalized, and some with severe consequences.

Currently, children as young as 12 years are getting vaccinated. Vaccination now does not require an appointment. Those wanting the vaccine can walk in at the Sports hall Betico Croes in Santa Cruz for their vaccine. Those under the age of 18 should have a parent present to

give their approval for the vaccine. Also local students residing abroad for school and temporarily vacationing in Aruba for at least three weeks can also receive their vaccines. To receive both vaccines, they must be in Aruba for at least three weeks for better protection. We have a vaccination facility, so those wanting the vaccine can get this. There is no reason not to take the vaccine. The consequences of the Delta variant are serious. Persons infected with the Delta variant get sick and hospitalized with severe health issues caused by the virus. If you do not wish to get vaccinated, please make sure you boost your immune system and keep yourself healthy. The government cannot force anybody to take the vaccine. It is the individual's responsibility. Everyone needs to



keep washing their hands frequently, use hand sanitizer, maintain social distance and when necessary and wear a face mask. In case you have any flu-like symptoms, please contact your family physician to get tested for Covid. If you are Covid positive, you have to isolate yourself for some time to protect others including your family.

After all, we all want Aruba to progress again. We are heading in the right direction and do not want to stop this development. Aruba is full of tourists and

is flourishing again. The unemployed are getting back to work. However, there are still some individuals who require financial aid provided by the Government. To continue with this support, Aruba needs to progress. It's not the richest country or most powerful country that can overcome the pandemic, but the most disciplined country, and Aruba has been very disciplined so far. We did this already and should continue to do so for the love of ourselves, our family, and Aruba", the Prime Minister mentioned. □

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## What does Aruba mean to you?

**ORANJESTAD — Aruba Today has a column called 'Aruba to Me' where readers are invited to send their favorite vacation picture along with a text starting describing what Aruba is to them. The column grew in popularity as many of you love to share their connection to our One Happy Island.**

Now we also offer you the opportunity to send us a video. Especially in this challenging time for the island we would appreciate your message of your experience here to share with those abroad who consider to vacation on our One Happy Island or who haven't booked their trip yet.

### What to do

The only thing you need to do is to record a short (maximum 1 minute) video with your phone and send it by whatsapp to the number +297 745-9030 or email to: news@arubatoday.com. Also do not forget to say your name and where you are from. We will post your video on the Facebook page, Instagram and website of Aruba Today! If you prefer a written message with picture the same email address is applicable. We look forward to share your message.

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## Urgent Care Aruba (UCA) Updates on Alternative Road Access and Medical Services

The Public Works Department DOW has started with work to improve road conditions in our street. This road work will have a duration of 5 weeks (Starting July 12th, 2021) and will be completed in two (2) phases. Reason why alternative roads has been created to access Noord Medical Center (Urgent Care Aruba and Medlab Laboratory).

To better guide you to our facility, we have created an indication map that illustrates the best alternative road, as well as a drone shot video that is available on our website [www.urgentcare.aw](http://www.urgentcare.aw). (Scan QR Code)

The alternative road description is as following if you are coming from the hotel area:  
You will start by reaching the round-a-bout next to the Noord Police Station, at



the second round-a-bout exit you continue straight ahead until you reach the Veterinaire Klinieken Aruba (to your left), turn left at the veterinary clinic and follow the road until you reaching the end of this road, you then turn left and continue straight ahead until you reach Noord Medical Center (Building will be in

front of you when reaching the end of this road). Signs has also been placed as an indication that you are heading in the right direction.

During the road work, Noord Medical Center (Urgent Care Aruba and Medlab Laboratory) will continue to operate as per usual

business hours and provide the same quality service to our patients.

As a medical facility, we offer medical assistance for non-life-threatening illnesses and injuries. Our clinic is also equipped with a Radiology Department to include X-Ray services, and a Gynecology (OBGYN) Department to include general gynecology services and 3D/4D ultrasound.

Urgent Care Aruba (UCA) often sees patients with COVID related symptoms, upper respiratory conditions, sore throats, coughs, earache, eye and sinus infections, urinary tract infections, fevers, gastrointestinal issues/ symptoms; nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, minor cuts scrapes, wounds, burns, abrasions, sprains, and strains; dislocations, back/ muscle pain, allergic reactions, sexually



transmitted infections, and more. All these symptoms are easily treatable if you seek medical attention. Communicate with us whenever one of these symptoms arise to assist you into a speedy recovery and back to your vacation time. You can contact us via phone (+297) 5860448, WhatsApp (+297) 5975549, or Facebook Inbox: Urgent Care Aruba. Our operation hours are from Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm, Saturday 8am to 4pm, and on Sundays from 10am to 2pm. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for any updates and weekly Pharmacy on Duty schedule.

For COVID-19 testing, visit [www.covidaruba.com](http://www.covidaruba.com) for more information and appointments, or contact our COVID WhatsApp line (+297) 5975548.

Our main goal is for you to not have to miss out on your vacation because of an illness or injury, we are here to give you the best medical attention on the island. The good news is, Urgent Care Aruba (UCA) works closely together with many travel insurance companies, giving you the opportunity to seek reimbursement on your medical expenses once you are back home. □





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## Savaneta, the first capital of Aruba

**SAVANETA** — Located on the southwestern coast of Aruba lies Savaneta. This old village was the island's first capital, and remained so until 1797, after which Oranjestad became the new capital of Aruba and remains so until this day. The oldest house in Aruba — a cas di torto, or mud hut, dating back some 150 years — is still standing in this historical town.

### What to do in Savaneta

The rustic charisma and relaxed atmosphere of this community beckons islanders looking for a casual retreat from their busy lives, as well as visitors looking for unfussy, authentic local charm. Relaxing days can be spent at Mangel Halto, a gem of a beach located just north of Savaneta, where a dense network of mangrove trees leads to an irresistibly inviting expanse of shallow, aquamarine water, made remarkably placid by the protective barrier reef further out. Savaneta's proximity and easy access to the sea has made this area popular within the local fishing community. Visitors will enjoy mingling with islanders at Zeerovers, a fisherman's wharf-cum-roadhouse promising a heady mix of local flavours. A counter near the entrance sells freshly caught fish to take away. Patrons can also have the fish prepared on the premises and then enjoy it on the

waterside deck among the seasoned locals discussing the latest town news over a few ice-cold beers.

Savaneta in Aruba is home to the Roly Bislick Olympic Pool complex, the training grounds for Aruba's elite swimmers and synchronised swimmers and host to many international competitions. The Marine Barracks Savaneta is also based here, housing the Royal Netherlands Navy, the Netherlands Marine Corps, the Netherlands Coastguard and the Aruban Military.

Not only is Savaneta popular for its cultural richness, but it is also a very tranquil place to stay. There are no big Savaneta resorts, but you will find a selection of small boutique hotels, holiday rentals and bed and breakfast-style accommodations.

Savaneta restaurants are known for their extremely fresh seafood and varied cuisine with a Caribbean twist.

When you ask a local about their favourite things to do in Savaneta, the chances are that visiting Mangel Halto Beach is one of them. This beach is like no other on the island. It is a great snorkeling spot adorned with beautiful mangroves, but what attracts everyone to this Savaneta gem is the laid back atmosphere! ☐

Source: aruba.com





# Millennial Money: A garden's lessons for growing money

By SEAN PYLES of NerdWallet

Soil, sun, water and seed: The ingredients of a garden are simple, but the final product is never guaranteed. Willing a plot of land into a vibrant state of bloom takes intention, know-how and no small amount of trial and error.

Like many people staying at home, I spent much of the past year tending to the soil of my yard and crafting a garden oasis of my own imagination. The work wasn't easy, and I'm sure many now-dead plants wish that I'd been a little more proficient.

But as my vision came to life — and I realized the care that this new hobby requires — I saw parallels between tending to a garden and handling finances with intentionality. Here's what my garden taught me about managing money.

## HAVE A VISION

Before you put a spade into the ground — or sign up for a new financial instrument — define what you want to accomplish. Like a garden, your financial future can be a reflection of your passions and priorities.

"There are no rules — it's your garden," says Brooke Edmunds, associate professor of community horticulture with Oregon State University Extension. "Don't be afraid to try new things. You'll get so much joy out of the pride of growing things yourself."

How you manage your money is an individual endeavor, too. "When imagining your goals, a good jumping-off point is defining your needs and your wants and what you value," says Lacey Langford, a North Carolina-based financial coach. "Not everyone values the same thing. Some people might value a nice home or a nice car or retirement savings more."

Understand that big goals can take years to accomplish. "Take the long-view approach," Edmunds says. "It really takes five years or so to really see how plants are and to learn your garden space."

Likewise, think about vari-



In this May 14, 2018 file photo, a couple walks on a path at Fairmount Park as they proceed under the trestle bridge over the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia.

Associated Press

ous aspects of your finances — debts, income, investments — and define what you want them to look like in five years. Do some self-reflection and sketch out the life you want. Then get started on bringing this vision to fruition.

## MAKE GROWTH EASY

With goals defined, dig in and establish the right foundation for growth.

In a garden, this step means testing the soil to determine if it has the right components to support your specific plants. Developing the right soil can make the difference between a season of vigorous growth and a lackluster performance.

When it comes to managing money, think of the fundamentals — things like income, expenses and savings, as well as your attitudes and behavior toward money — as the soil. Your ambitions are the plants you put into the ground, hoping they'll take root and thrive. Upon inspection, you may find that you're primed for growth or that the soil needs amending. Adjusting financial habits to meet an ambitious sav-

ings goal, like a down payment on a house, is one example. If you're not able to save much after covering your current expenses, get creative and trim expenses or increase your income.

Next, turn to your attitudes and habits around money, says Kathleen Burns Kingsbury, a wealth psychology expert based in Vermont.

"I recommend people look at what lessons they learned growing up about managing money," Burns Kingsbury says. "How have those beliefs about money impacted their behavior as adults? The foundational part is really looking at how these thoughts and beliefs impact your ability to make progress down this path."

Reorienting attitudes toward money can help you meet your goals. For example, you may have been

taught that debt should be avoided at all costs. You could reassess your thinking and explore ways to use debt as a financial tool with less risk. When paying for a major expense, a credit card that has a 0% annual-percentage-rate period could help you cover the cost while keeping your savings intact.

## PUT IN THE WORK

A green thumb or a certified financial planner certificate isn't necessary to achieve your goals. Much like weeding, regularly chipping away at tasks is easier than trying to accomplish everything immediately.

"You don't have to weed the entire garden in one day," Burns Kingsbury says. "Take a small chunk and think about how to get rid of those weeds."

Focus on regular tasks to nurture your finances. When paying off debt, for example, spend a day organizing accounts into a spreadsheet or using a debt tracker. The next day choose a payoff path, like the debt snowball or debt avalanche method, then stick with it. Breaking tasks into small steps makes them easier to manage. The same is true when improving credit; making regular on-time payments will build your score over time.

"Your garden doesn't have to be perfect, but stay on top of your weeds so they don't affect the productivity of your garden," Edmunds says.

Tending to a garden and managing finances are about marrying a bold vision with daily, incremental tasks to bring it to life. □





# CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

## ACROSS

- 1 Farm sight
- 5 Barber-shop offering
- 10 Reclined
- 11 Hot, in a way
- 12 Fairy tale monster
- 13 Lamented loudly
- 14 Arrogant folks
- 16 Kitchen appliances
- 20 Parade site
- 23 Compete
- 24 Pens for hens
- 25 Constructed
- 27 Radius setting
- 28 Popular trees
- 29 Poultry buys
- 32 Table protectors
- 36 Big lummo
- 39 Region
- 40 Brings to bear
- 41 Fight site
- 42 Prom crowd
- 43 Head, to Henri

## DOWN

- 1 Messy person
- 2 Othello's betrayer
- 3 Old Italian coin
- 4 Easy dance
- 5 Flag features
- 6 Raise
- 7 Completely
- 8 Neckline shape
- 9 Finale
- 11 Work byproduct
- 15 Low digits
- 17 Diabolical
- 18 Irritate
- 19 Collec-tions
- 20 Wound remnant
- 21 Matador's foe
- 22 Capital of Italia
- 25 Cell feature
- 26 Parvenu
- 28 Ham and lamb
- 30 Ridicule
- 31 Horn output
- 33 Lake near Buffalo
- 34 Monthly bill
- 35 Cook's mint
- 36 Attain
- 37 Fire
- 38 Sheltered side

S	E	N	D		C	A	S	T
C	L	A	U	S		L	A	N
R	O	M	E	O		O	R	G
U	P	A		B	A	T	T	E
B	E	T	T	E	R	S		L
	S	H	O	R	T		T	A
		A	S	F	O	R		
P	A	D		A	P	O	R	T
A	L	L		B	I	T	T	E
B	U	T	T	E	R	S		M
A	R	E	A	S		I	M	A
T	A	R	T	S		N	A	D
E	L	S	A			D	E	C

Yesterday's answer

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9
10					11				
12					13				
14					15				
				16				17	18
20	21	22						23	
24					25	26			
27					28				
29			30	31					
			32					33	34
36	37	38						39	
40								41	
42								43	

7-29

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

7-29

## CRYPTOQUOTE

I L R Z C J V I K N R D R I V

P I I D R N X C V B I I T N I W E R B I S

E I N B I S B X V I X C J V F R Z N I L S

V F B I S — T N C L U X F R R G

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: MISTAKES ARE A FACT OF LIFE. IT IS THE RESPONSE TO THE ERROR THAT COUNTS. — NIKKI GIOVANNI



In this Feb. 17, 2016, file photo an iPhone is seen in Washington.

Associated Press

## Turn off, turn on: Simple step can thwart top phone hackers

ALAN SUDERMAN

Associated Press

**RICHMOND, Va. (AP)** — As a member of the secretive Senate Intelligence Committee, Sen. Angus King has reason to worry about hackers. At a briefing by security staff this year, he said he got some advice on how to help keep his cellphone secure.

### Step One: Turn off phone.

### Step Two: Turn it back on.

That's it. At a time of widespread digital insecurity it turns out that the oldest and simplest computer fix there is — turning a device off then back on again — can thwart hackers from stealing information from smartphones.

Regularly rebooting phones won't stop the army of cybercriminals or spy-for-hire firms that have sowed chaos and doubt about the ability to keep any information safe and private in our digital lives. But it can make even the most sophisticated hackers work harder to maintain access and steal data from a phone.

"This is all about imposing cost on these malicious actors," said Neal Ziring, technical director of the National Security Agency's cybersecurity directorate.

The NSA issued a "best practices" guide for mobile device security last year in which it recommends rebooting a phone every week as a way to stop hacking.

King, an independent from Maine, says rebooting his phone is now part of his routine. "I'd say probably once a week, whenever I think of it," he said.

Almost always in arm's reach, rarely turned off and holding huge stores of personal and sensitive data, cellphones have become top targets for hackers looking to steal text messages, contacts and photos, as well as track users' locations and even secretly turn on their video and microphones. "I always think of phones as like our digital soul," said Patrick Wardle, a se-

curity expert and former NSA researcher.

The number of people whose phones are hacked each year is unknowable, but evidence suggests it's significant. A recent investigation into phone hacking by a global media consortium has caused political uproars in France, India, Hungary and elsewhere after researchers found scores of journalists, human rights activists and politicians on a leaked list of what were believed to be potential targets of an Israeli hacker-for-hire company.

The advice to periodically reboot a phone reflects, in part, a change in how top hackers are gaining access to mobile devices and the rise of so-called "zero-click" exploits that work without any user interaction instead of trying to get users to open something that's secretly infected.

"There's been this evolution away from having a target click on a dodgy link," said Bill Marczak, a senior researcher at Citizen Lab, an internet civil rights watchdog at the University of Toronto. Typically, once hackers gain access to a device or network, they look for ways to persist in the system by installing malicious software to a computer's root file system. But that's become more difficult as phone manufacturers such as Apple and Google have strong security to block malware from core operating systems, Ziring said. "It's very difficult for an attacker to burrow into that layer in order to gain persistence," he said. That encourages hackers to opt for "in-memory payloads" that are harder to detect and trace back to whoever sent them. Such hacks can't survive a reboot, but often don't need to since many people rarely turn their phones off. "Adversaries came to the realization they don't need to persist," Wardle said. "If they could do a one-time pull and exfiltrate all your chat messages and your contact and your passwords, it's almost game over anyways, right?" □



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## Mena Suvari explains writing about Kevin Spacey in new book

By ALICIA RANCILIO  
Associated Press

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Mena Suvari wants to explain her reasoning for writing about Kevin Spacey on the set of their 1999 film “American Beauty” in her new book “The Great Peace” (Hachette).

Spacey won an Oscar for his role in the film as Lester Burnham, a suburban husband and father in the midst of a midlife crisis, who becomes fixated on his daughter's best friend, Angela, played by Suvari. On the day of filming a scene where Lester and Angela lie on a sofa together, Suvari writes that at set, Spacey took her “into a small room with a bed,” where they laid down, facing each other while he held her “lightly.” Suvari, 42, says she doesn't know if it was an instruction at the time from director Sam Mendes. In the book, she describes the tactic as “a genius move” because they went on to film an intimate scene with tenderness and sincerity.

Suvari tells The Associated Press that the reason why she included the story in her book was not to say anything against Spacey — whose career has halted in recent years due to legal troubles and allegations of sexual abuse — but to show how as a young woman about 20 years his junior, she didn't question the situation.

“I used that story and that moment with Kevin simply to show that it was just another moment where me as a young woman ended up in a room with a man older than me — in a situation like that, a somewhat intimate, situation, and that was OK with me” said Suvari. “That was just commonplace. It was just understood.” Suvari said: “I tried to share that story in connection with the others that came before it to



This cover image provided by Hachette Books shows “The Great Peace” by Mena Suvari.

Associated Press

show where I was at and to create a conversation around that, because, again, that work's not done and I'm still figuring that out. But it's interesting to me why I thought nothing of that.”

In “The Great Peace,” Suvari does identify past abusive relationships, her struggles with self-esteem and body image, substance abuse and financial troubles.

Suvari was sexually assaulted at age 12, she said. After moving to Los Angeles as a young teen to pursue acting, there were a number of toxic encounters that she didn't question at the time with people who led her into sexual situations in which she wasn't always comfortable. She says alcohol and drugs helped her cope, which led to meth use, and that she's “still doing the work” to remain sober.

She credits therapy for enabling her to look back and allow herself to “consider how I was treated,” and “the type of things that I encountered, because I would always excuse it.”

Sharing her story, says Suvari, is about taking her power back and owning what happened. She's also developing a TV series inspired by her life. □



This image released by Focus Features shows Matt Damon in a scene from “Stillwater.”

Associated Press

## In ‘Stillwater,’ a red state hero roams chic France

By MARK KENNEDY  
AP Entertainment Writer

Early on in “Stillwater,” a gruff oil rig worker from Oklahoma is asked what he's doing in the French port city of Marseille. “Visiting my daughter,” he replies.

That's only sort of right, it turns out. He left some stuff out. But truth itself gets more than a little smeared in this fascinating film that's really a character study pretending to be a thriller. Matt Damon stars as the Oklahoman, a goateed, denim-wearing roughneck named Bill with a sad past. He's visiting his daughter (Abigail Breslin) in France — that part is true. But it's not like she's studying abroad — she's in prison for an Amanda Knox-like murder she insists she did not commit.

A potential break in the case unleashes Bill on the streets of the fading, cosmopolitan Marseille for the true killer. Except he's no Jason Bourne or Liam Neeson: Bill clumsily bulldozes through a new culture, language and justice system, relying on Gallic kindness along the way. He is cringe-worthy. He is an American hero inverted.

Oscar-winning director Tom McCarthy — who co-wrote “Stillwater” with Marcus Hinchey, Thomas Bidegain and Noé Debré — at first seems to be trafficking in notions of the Ugly Ameri-

can, that brash boor at the butt of Continental disdain. “You sound very American right now,” Bill is told after failing to grasp that doing something both legally and ethically wrong to free his daughter might be a bad idea.

But “Stillwater” is after more than just caricature and, astonishingly, the movie abandons the hunt for the real killer for long stretches to focus on domestic tranquility. The tonal shifts might be too much for some viewers sucked in by a poster and trailer that dwell on the chase.

Damon's character befriends a local single mother (played brilliantly by the French actress Camille Cottin, star of the Netflix series “Call My Agent”) and her 9-year-old daughter, Maya, played delightfully by Lilou Siauvaud. Together they pull him out of his cliché.

The girl teaches him French and does not recoil at his eagle-and-skull tattoo. She sees through his gruff exterior and offers him another chance at fatherhood, this time with a better outcome. She even converts him to soccer, a sport he initially called a game for “cry-babies.”

He finds a connection with her mother — both are single parents, after all — that soon has this roughneck attending the theater (he still insists on pronouncing

it “thee-ay-ter”). The trio make a sweet, off-kilter family, but they are tested by the pull from Bill's biological family, namely his daughter.

What lengths is he willing to go to free her? How far outside the law of a foreign country will he go? Will he pick the past over a makeshift new life? Or, as his daughter wails, is he just fated to mess everything up?

Bill is a hard part to pull off, but Damon does, creating a flawed but compassionate character, made doubly hard since he outwardly reveals little emotion. Damon plays him with a haunted sadness, unfailingly polite (“yes, ma'am”) and devout, honorable as long as you see things his way.

He is asked by the fascinated French if he owns guns and he does, two of 'em. He is asked if he voted for Donald Trump and he couldn't — felons can't vote. It's a cute side-step of the issue, but there's zero chance he was a Hillary backer.

The way Bill walks — stiffly, unyielding, almost martial — sticks out on the streets of Marseille. He wears high-waisted work jeans, steel-toed boots and a dusty baseball cap, listening to country and eating hamburgers and at a Subway sandwich shop even in France. □



# Griggs returns to baseball roots as new Mariners executive

By TIM BOOTH  
AP Sports Writer

**SEATTLE (AP)** — Baseball was an integral part of Catie Griggs' life growing up just not when it came to her career.

Now it will dominate her professional life as she takes over as president of business operations for the Seattle Mariners.

"I think one of the things that undoubtedly wouldn't have come across in my LinkedIn profile or any resume that you all may have been looking at, I grew up with a batting cage in my backyard. I grew up playing Little League ball," Griggs said. "My dad and I spent a lot of nights at the old Durham Athletic Park watching the Durham Bulls play when they were a Single-A affiliate of the Braves. Baseball has always been a part of my life, it's a passion of mine."

Griggs was formally introduced in her new role Wednesday before the Mariners closed out a homestand against Houston. She spent the past four seasons as the chief business officer for the Atlanta United of Major League Soccer and will oversee all aspects of the Mariners organization outside of baseball operations.

She joins a small group of women holding executive roles in Major League Baseball. According to the Mariners, Griggs is the only woman to hold a "president" title role with a club in the majors.

"I've had the privilege of holding a lot of senior-level roles and I think it is a privilege and an honor to set a path for other people to follow up," Griggs said. "With that being said, I truly view my role in this organization, in every organization, as being the absolute best leader I can be. And that has nothing to do with my gender. So with that being said, it's a privilege and an honor and one I take very seriously. But it's not something I spend a lot of time thinking about."

Griggs replaces Kevin Mather, who resigned in February after video sur-

faced of him making derogatory remarks about some players and club operations. Mather took insensitive shots at a former All-Star from Japan and a top prospect from the Dominican Republic for their English skills, and admitted the team possibly manipulated service time for some of its young players.

Mather oversaw both baseball and business operations for the Mariners. Following his resignation, Mariners chairman John Stanton said those roles would be split.

Griggs will begin her new role full time the week of Aug. 23.

"It's very important to me that the culture of this organization include the values that she just talked about



Catie Griggs is introduced as the Seattle Mariners new president of business operations by John Stanton, the team's chairman and managing partner, during a baseball press conference on Wednesday, July 28, 2021.

Associated Press

in terms of diversity and inclusion, in terms of embracing and addressing the progressive ideas, the new

ideas," Stanton said. "Innovation is one of the key elements of this organization and Catie reflected that in every conversation that we had."

Griggs said that while she has spent the majority of her life in the South, her family has many connections to the Pacific Northwest. She'll start the role with about six weeks left in the regular season but intends to connect with the fan base as quickly as possible.

"I'm here to listen. I'm here to learn. I want to know what you like. I want to know what you don't like," Griggs said. "I want to know what it will take to make the Seattle Mariners the single best experience in the city of Seattle." □

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# Ledecky wins gold, Biles drops out of all-around



Katie Ledecky, of the United States, reacts after winning the women's 1500-meters freestyle final at the 2020 Summer Olympics, Wednesday, July 28, 2021, in Tokyo, Japan.

Associated Press

By JOSH DUBOW  
AP Sports Writer

**TOKYO (AP)** — Katie Ledecky got her first gold medal of these Olympics, while Simone Biles pulled out of another event she

came into the Games favored to win.

Ledecky bounced back from losses in her first two events in Tokyo to win the inaugural 1,500-meter freestyle for women by more

than 4 seconds on Wednesday.

The victory came about after Ledecky finished fifth in the 200-meter freestyle for her worst finish ever at an Olympics. Ledecky came into the Games with five gold medals but finished second to Australia's Ariarne Titmus in the 400 free and then failed to medal in the 200 that Titmus also won.

"I think people maybe feel bad for me that I'm not winning everything and whatever, but I want people to be more concerned about other things going on in the world, people that are truly suffering," Ledecky said. "I'm just proud to bring home a gold medal to Team USA."

Biles, the American gymnastics superstar, withdrew from Thursday's all-around competition to focus on her mental well-being.

USA Gymnastics said in a statement that the 24-year-old is opting to not compete. The decision comes a day after Biles removed herself from the team final following one rotation because she felt she wasn't mentally ready.

The organization said Biles will be evaluated daily before deciding if she will participate in next week's individual events. Biles qualified for the finals on all four apparatuses, something she didn't even do during her five-medal haul in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. Jade Carey, who finished ninth in qualifying, will take Biles' place in the all-around.

**JAPANESE THREE-PEAT**  
Japanese teenager Daiki Hashimoto won a gold medal in men's all-around. The 19-year-old Hashimoto used a thrilling high bar routine during the final rotation to edge Xiao Ruoteng of China and reigning world champion Nikita Nagornyy. Hashimoto's all-around total of 88.465 points included a 14.933 on high bar. That was good enough for him to surge past Xiao and into the top spot. The gold is the third straight Olympic title for the Japanese gymnast. Kohei Uchimura won in 2012 and 2016.

**DEBUT EVENT**  
The U.S. team of Stefanie Dolson, Allisha Gray, Kelsey Plum and Jackie Young have won the first women's gold medal in the new Olympic sport of 3-on-3 basketball. Plum scored all five of her points early to help the Americans take the lead, and they held on for an 18-15 win over the team representing the Russian Olympic Committee. Latvia beat Russia for the gold in the men's event.

**HISTORIC RACE**  
Britain has won the men's 4x200-meter freestyle relay at the Olympics for the first time since 1908, but just missed a world record. With a powerhouse group that included the 1-2 finish-

ers in the 200 freestyle, Britain blew away the field in 6 minutes, 58.58 seconds. That was just off the world record set by the Americans (6:58.55) at the 2009 world championships. It was the first British gold in the event since it made its debut at the first London Games.

Russia claimed the silver in 7:01.81, while Australia took the bronze in 7:01.84.

The four-time defending champion Americans finished fourth — the first time they've failed to win a medal in the event other than the boycotted 1980 Moscow Games.

**BOUNCE BACK**  
Damian Lillard scored 21 points and the U.S. men's basketball team rebounded from an opening loss with their first victory of these Olympics, romping past Iran 120-66.

Devin Booker scored 16 points and Jayson Tatum had 14 for the Americans, who had their 25-game Olympic winning streak snapped with an 83-76 loss to France on Sunday.

The U.S. not only bounced back with a win but did it in a Dream Team-type performance against an overmatched opponent, racing out for transition dunks and stepping back to knock down 3-pointers.

**COMEBACK KIDS**  
Hayato Sakamoto hit a game-ending, bases-loaded single that capped a three-run, ninth-inning rally, lifting host Japan over the Dominican Republic 4-3 in the Olympic baseball opener.

Japan is pursuing its first gold medal in baseball after the sport was restored to the Summer Games for the first time since 2008. Few medals would mean more to the baseball-crazed country, and expectations are high.

**GOLDEN SLAM**  
Tennis star Novak Djokovic moved one step closer to winning the Golden Slam. The top-ranked Serb beat training partner Alejandro Davidovich Fokina of Spain 6-3, 6-1 to reach the quarterfinals of the Tokyo tennis tournament. □

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